

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3246

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0080

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MR MO AG SS SP

SUBJECT: MAURITANIA FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES SPANISH SAHARA

1. DURING COURTESY CALL JANUARY 13 WITH MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS, VISITING AF/W DEPUTY DIRECTOR BISHOP AND CHARGE ASKED ABOUT CURRENT MAURITANIAN POSITION ON SPANISH SAHARA.

2. OULD MOUKNASS MADE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS: (A) ISSUE MUST BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY; (B) MAURITANIA HAS ABSOLUTELY NO DISAGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO ON POLICY OR TACTICS FOR DEALING WITH SPANISH SAHARA. MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ARE NOW ONE ON THIS ISSUE. ALMOST AS AFTERTHOUGHT, HE SAID NOR DOES MAURITANIA HAVE DISAGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA IN DEALING WITH PROBLEM; (C) SPAIN MUST LEAVE SPANISH SAHARA. IT HAS NO RIGHT TO CONTINUE ITS PRESENCE THERE; (D) WHEN ASKED ABOUT FUTURE OF TERRITORY, OULD MOUKNASS SAID THIS WOULD BE DECIDED BY PEOPLE OF SPANISH SAHARA
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TOGETHER WITH GOVERNMENTS OF MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO;

(E) FOREIGN MINISTER THOUGHT INTERNATIONAL COURT WILL RENDER DECISION QUICKLY, PERHAPS IN MATTER OF MONTHS. HE ADDED THAT GIRM IS NOW PREPARING BRIEFS TO PRESENT TO COURT.

3. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTION, WOULD MOUKNASS SAID REFERENDUM ON SELF-DETERMINATION IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE IN SPANISH SAHARA IF IT IS HELD "UNDER THE GUN" OF SPANISH CONTROL. ON OTHER HAND, HE SAID MAURITANIA WOULD AGREE TO REFERENDUM UNDER AUSPICES OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. OULD MOUKNASS, WHO ORIGINALLY COMES FROM SPANISH SAHARA, STATED THERE ARE MAXIMUM OF 30,000 SPANISH SAHARANS, AS SPOSED TO EXPARTRIATE PERSONNEL, CURRENTLY LIVING INTERRITORY.

4. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S INSISTENCE THAT MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO ARE ONE ON THIS ISSUE AND DOWNPLAYING OF ALGERIAN ROLE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTING. ADDITIONALLY, OULD MOUKNASS' SUGGESTION THAT THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 30,000 SPANISH SAHARANS IN TERRITORY MIGHT EVEN BE INTERPRETED AS INDICATION THAT MAURITANIA BELIEVES ENTITY CANNOT BECOME VIABLE INDEPENDENT STATE. THIS STANCE COINCIDES WITH RECENT COMMENTS TO CHARGE BY MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR (DEC 31, 1974 MEMCON) THAT SPANISH SAHARAN PROBLEM WILL ULTIMATELY BE DECIDED BY "UN ARRANGEMENT" BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA.SHINN

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